



Frequently Asked Questions

August 2018

HOW DO I DETERMINE THE SIGHT TRIANGLE ON MY PROPERTY?

The City has placed silver nails at the sight triangle corners on your property and circled these with yellow or white paint to help you identify the area to clear. Stand at the farthest painted marker from the intersection and look at the 20' mark to define your first sight distance triangle. Repeat on the other side of the corner for the second sight distance triangle. Watch the video on our website (www.redmond.gov/sighttriangle) for additional instructions.

DO LARGE TREES OR FENCES HAVE TO BE REMOVED?

No, large trees should not be removed. They can remain, but please trim their branches to a height of 8 feet. Other objects that obstruct visibility such as fences, hedges, and large shrubs need to be removed. Objects 18 inches or less in width or diameter are allowed in the sight distance triangle when spaced at an adequate distance to not significantly obstruct the sight distance triangle.

WILL THE CITY COVER THE COST OF THIS WORK?

The Redmond Zoning Code requires all property owners to keep sight triangles clear of obstructions on their property and out to the adjacent street curb. If your sight triangle is not clear of obstructions, it is your responsibility to resolve the problem at your own expense.

WHY AM I BEING NOTIFIED NOW?

The requirement to keep sight triangles clear has been in City code since 1982 or earlier. Previously, city staff enforced the sight triangles for all new development in the city and responded to existing problems only when complaints were received for a particular location. In 2016, the Washington State Supreme Court ruled against King County in a lawsuit involving a motorist who was hurt in a collision at an intersection where the sight triangle was blocked by vegetation.

With this ruling, staff consulted with the City Attorney and determined that “reasonable steps” included a city-wide inventory of all sight triangles, and subsequent follow up with any property owners to have them trim back or remove vegetation or other objects blocking sight lines. This city-wide action represents a more proactive approach than the previous complaint driven response and should significantly reduce the risk of claims against the City and private property owners in collisions involving sight triangles.

HOW MUCH NOTICE IS THE CITY GIVING HOMEOWNERS?

The first notice to homeowners is delivered via a door hanger left on the property approximately one month before the work needs to be completed. This door hanger includes an official notice, Frequently Asked Questions, and a photo of the obstruction with instructions. A second notice is mailed to homeowners approximately two weeks before the work is due to be completed.

WHAT IF I CAN'T COMPLETE THE WORK BY THE DEADLINE?

Please call the number provided (425-556-2850) so we can discuss your specific situation in more detail.

I SEE LOTS OF OTHER PROPERTIES THAT ARE OBSTRUCTING SIGHT DISTANCE TRIANGLES, DID THEY ALSO RECEIVE A NOTICE?

In the summer of 2017, the city marked out, photographed, and mapped sight triangles at public intersections throughout the city. We completed this work for 884 intersections and marked a total of 3,682 sight triangles. Approximately 2,400 properties had some degree of obstruction. The city is now working to notify property owners of the obstructions and have them clear these sight triangles. Due to large volume of properties, the city is sending out notifications in batches starting this summer. The city will systematically notify all of the properties who had obstructions identified in 2017.

CAN I INSTALL A CONVEX MIRROR INSTEAD OF REMOVING THE VISUAL OBSTRUCTION?

Although mirrors can help with visibility around corners they are not a suitable alternative to clearing the sight triangle. Obstructions still need to be removed.

WHY DIDN'T THIS ISSUE GET BROUGHT UP WHEN THE HOME WAS FIRST DEVELOPED?

The city inspects new homes when they are first built. However, the developer or contractor is ultimately responsible to meet the applicable codes and standards. Vegetation may have grown since the home was inspected or other obstructions such as fences could have been added at a later date. Unless a special permit was acquired for a sight distance triangle obstruction (such as a garage) the obstruction is still subject to code. The City, through the Municipal Code, has the authority to enforce adherence to any codes and standards regardless of the prior inspection.

CAN SOMEONE FROM THE CITY COME TAKE A LOOK AT MY SPECIFIC PROPERTY?

City staff surveyed your property in the summer of 2017 and confirmed the sight distance triangle obstruction when delivering the initial notice. The city does not have staff capacity to make additional visits to all of the properties. We are happy to answer your questions about the obstruction or the work required. You can also send us a photo of your property if you need additional clarification.

IS THERE AN APPEAL PROCESS?

The flyer or letter you received is to alert you of your sight triangle obstruction and of your responsibility to keep this area clear as stated in the Redmond Zoning Code and is not subject to appeal. If it becomes necessary to serve you with a formal code enforcement order, then this order would be subject to appeal to the City Hearings Examiner. However, please be aware that this appeal would only be to decide if your sight triangle is obscured and not to determine if the code requirement is valid.

QUESTIONS?

Email us at sighttriangles@redmond.gov, call us at 425-556-2850, or visit us online at www.redmond.gov/sighttriangle

The City of Redmond assures that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, or gender, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity. For more information about Title VI, please visit redmond.gov/TitleVI.

